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ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE RURAL POOR

A Guide to Research

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

PREFACE

This is one of several studies made to provide research approaches in different problem areas of rural poverty and economic development. These studies were initiated by the Economic Research Service to assist in program planning and guidance for future research. Generally, each one provides an outline of the problem of concern, a survey of previous research, evaluation of applicable research methods, and specific research proposals. Results are being used in expanding and reorienting the research program of the Economic Research Service. They should also be of value to other researchers in the areas covered.

This report was prepared by the author under contract. The author's opinions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Economic Research Service, or the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE RURAL POOR -- A GUIDE TO RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

The emphasis in this paper is on the rural poor, but it must be recognized that rural people in the United States are exposed to political, economic, and social influences similar to those experienced by people who live in towns, cities, and metropolitan centers. Universal free education is available to all regardless of residence, even though there are variations in the quality of an education attained in a rural school in contrast to a school located in a city. Common aspects of schooling include instruction in the English language, American history, elementary mathematics, and other subjects. All members of the society share in such common experiences as war, depression, and social legislation, although these experiences vary in different sections of the country, different industries, different occupations, and for individuals. Nevertheless, these social experiences and others have contributed to the development of an institutionalized value structure which, although it is not accepted with the same degree of enthusiasm by all members, is a point of reference for evaluating divergent values and behavior.

The values regarding work are of unusual significance. Work occupies a central place in the lives of modern Americans. Occupational achievement, although not the only basis for obtaining the necessities of life, is, for most adults, the principal source of income and, certainly, is the approved method of gaining a livelihood. The work imperative, sometimes called the Puritan ethic or Protestant ethic, is probably the dominant value among those who are employed in upper and middle status occupations. There is some question about the extent to which the intense devotion to work which characterizes Americans in upper middle socioeconomic categories is shared by manual workers, assembly line operators, clerks, and others who are employed at unskilled, routine, or repetitive jobs. Nevertheless, it is true that relatively few able-bodied males between the ages of 25 and 65 in America are willingly without work. Unemployment for substantial lengths of time is considered catastrophic for the individual and for his family.

The occupational expectations for women are much different from those for men. Most married women regard employment outside the home as ancillary to the roles involved in family life. Women on farms are not expected to engage in heavy manual work in America, although this appears to be commonplace in

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the Soviet Union and in some other societies. Except for school teaching, nursing, and home economics, relatively few women enter the professions or administrative fields.

The pervasive influence of work-related values is such that every boy is aware that he will eventually participate in some occupational role. Consequently, he is motivated to start thinking about an occupation long before he is able to appraise his future capacity on a realistic basis. With the growing level of participation of women in the labor force, girls also become involved in occupational role playing. Research shows that most young men from American families of middle socioeconomic status not only expect to work for wages or salary after leaving school, but are usually motivated to work hard and generally aspire to move upward to higher level occupations than those held by their fathers. Evidence from social scientific studies shows that high school students tend to regard work as desirable for its own sake rather than merely a means to an end. Furthermore, there is increasing recognition that educational achievements are related positively to eventual occupational success.

In American society, occupational recognition is supposed to be achieved on the basis of the merits of the individual without regard to his social characteristics or the economic level of his family of origin. In its extreme form, this is known as the "Horatio Alger" myth. It is the idea that a boy from a log cabin can rise to fame and fortune if he works hard enough. It has happened in America that poor boys have risen to positions of power and influence, but the odds are against it.

There is general agreement that American adults tend to regard work as central, especially men; but there are many differences in the meaning of work to those who are employed in different occupations, to people who live in different communities, and to those who are members of ethnic minority groups. There are differences between rural and urban residents and between those who live in different sections of the United States. Nevertheless, it is probably correct to assume that the work imperative is very strong among adults, especially among those in commercial agriculture and in middle status nonfarm occupations. Work is regarded as the only honorable way of earning a livelihood. It is required of all men in reasonably good health who do not have sufficient means to live comfortably without working. Even among wealthy, laziness and loafing are conspicuous by their absence. These attitudes concerning work are accepted by most young people. They seek employment when they arrive at the proper age.

But even though this is true in general, there are obviously differences in levels of educational and occupational aspirations, and perhaps even greater differences in the level of expectations of individuals reared in different economic and cultural circumstances.

There are indications that the values governing attitudes toward work are changing. Tilgher, more than 30 years ago, indicated that he thought he saw indications of a lessening of devotion to work (62, pp. 11-23). 2/ There have

2/ Underlined numbers in parentheses refer to Bibliography, p. 28.

been allegations in popular magazines of a decline in emphasis on frugality and an increasing tendency on the part of younger people to satisfy wants immediately, rather than saving for some later goal; but no definitive comparative data are available.

The work week for employed workers in many occupations has declined from that which was customary a generation ago. Annual vacations are becoming prevalent so that it is possible that the style of life, including achievements in nonwork activities, may in the future give some challenge to occupation as a principal determinant of individual esteem and social rank. However, it seems unlikely that the work imperative will disappear as a central value in the foreseeable future, even granting that technological developments may tremendously affect many industries and occupations.

Widespread public recognition has recently been given to the fact that substantial proportions of the American people have not shared to any great extent in the material aspects of the "affluent society." A flood of books, articles, and monographs have appeared on this subject. These range from "bare bones" factual presentations to highly emotional appeals for social action. The present national administration has initiated a "War on Poverty." The Congress of the United States has enacted legislation including the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, and other laws, which are designed to provide a broad statutory base for social action designed to eradicate the causes of poverty.

In addition, under the leadership of the President the executive branch of the Federal Government is being mobilized to give special attention to the problems of the poor. Thus we may expect to find, to some degree at least, diversion of existing programs and resources to meet the problems of the poor, including those who live in rural areas.

There has been little research since the beginning of World War II directed specifically to the problems of the rural poor either by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or by the State agricultural experiment stations. One notable exception is the southern regional study S-44 entitled "Factors in the Adjustment of Families and Individuals in the Low Income Rural Areas of the South" (31). The few systematic studies which have analyzed the characteristics and circumstances of the poor in America have been made primarily by sociologists, psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, and journalists who have studied and reported on the problems of poverty in urban areas.

Many of the rural poor are concentrated in Appalachia and other areas of the Southeast, in the Lake States cutover, and in a few other regions (4). In addition, there are many who live in relatively prosperous communities throughout the United States. Economic deprivation is, of course, a relative matter. Compared with the poor of many nations, some poor Americans might appear affluent.

It has been suggested by the Committee for Economic Development that the problems of poverty in agriculture are basically due to an oversupply of manpower (12). The Committee for Economic Development has suggested this problem may be solved by encouraging accelerated movement into nonfarm occupations,

including migration to urban areas where necessary. In this connection, it may be pointed out that farm population has been declining both in percentage and in absolute numbers since the 1930's. Continued application of scientific knowledge to the technology of agriculture can be anticipated. Consequently, the need for human labor on American farms will continue to decline. Those who remain on farms and those who provide specialized services to farmers will need more knowledge and a higher level of skill than ever before. There will be a continuing demand for specialists and, therefore, a need for specialized training to prepare people for a myriad of specialized agricultural occupations.

We can anticipate that operators of commercial farms and the specialists who provide them with essential services will share in the material benefits of economic progress. Those who remain in subsistence farming, plus unskilled rural nonfarm residents who cannot find employment on commercial farms or in agribusiness, are likely to continue to be poor. What can be done to provide them with escape routes from poverty? Whatever the answer, it will not be easy. Many of these poor people, because of age, chronic illness, or other incapacity have very poor prospects.

For those who are basically capable workers it is, of course, a matter of paramount national importance that attractive occupational opportunities be available. This in turn requires continued expansion of the economy so that adequate nonfarm employment opportunities will be created. It would not be appropriate to discuss here the difficult problems involved in achieving an expansion of the magnitude required in the face of accelerating technological developments, including automation.

What must be of concern is the high probability that the type of expansion most likely to occur will not by itself solve the problems of the rural poor. More than expansion of employment is needed. Adults who have been unemployed or underemployed, those who are ill or otherwise incapacitated, the aged, and untrained young people who have not yet entered the labor force cannot move freely into skilled or technical jobs. The trend of rapidly decreasing proportions of unskilled jobs is unlikely to be arrested, much less reversed. Furthermore, many of the poor may have little motivation to improve their economic circumstances either through work or education. As Myrdal has pointed out, those who are unemployed for any length of time tend to sink into apathy (41, p. 44). This is probably also true of the underemployed who work at jobs in which they have little or no prospect for advancement.

The question to which this paper is addressed is: How can we achieve sufficient understanding of the circumstances, the factors, and the processes involved in raising low aspirations and low expectations so that action programs can be devised which will stimulate the poor to aspire to rise from poverty?

Conceptual Frames of Reference

The position of the writer is that the concepts and insights of at least three major social science disciplines should be drawn upon in formulating research on the aspirations and expectations of the rural poor. The disciplines are economics, social psychology, and sociology. The model to be employed is the social systems model which now has widespread though not universal acceptance among contemporary sociologists. 3/ This model assumes that each individual is identified with and affected by the distinctive subcultures of the social systems which are most meaningful to him; those which serve, in the words of Newcomb, as "anchor points" for his personality (42, p. 225).

Although every American is subjected to certain influences which are similar for all members of the society, it is obvious that there are many influences which are not the same for all. Some commonplace examples are the following: People in different regions of the country tend to share generalized attitudes on matters such as racial desegregation; there are differences in religious dogma between Christians and Jews; among Christians there are differences in dogma between Catholics and Protestants; among Protestants there are differences in dogma among various sects; and every local community has some unique historical experiences which over time have become traditions and which affect the values of longtime adult residents and their children.

Students are influenced in many ways at school. They obtain knowledge about various subjects, but in addition, they receive indications of their scholastic and personal merit.

Reference groups are of paramount importance in that portion of the culture comprising values -- those ideas by which the worth of things are judged. Most important of the reference groups is the family of origin. For children and adolescents, peer groups and school influences may be second and third in importance. The model holds that many of the generalized societal influences and incentives become operative in lives of individual persons only as they are mediated through the individual's reference groups.

We do not propose a mechanistic model to explain all human motivation and behavior in terms of rules passed on to members of specific groups. Neither, however, do we accept the extreme psychologistic view that the explanation for human attitudes and behavior can be found wholly in the individual psyche. There is a middle ground which is more tenable than either of these extreme positions. As the writer said in another connection,

> Human beings are able to think abstractly, to make choices, and, within culturally established limits, to direct their own activities in terms of their anticipation of future events. People are able to evaluate their own actions and reactions to

3/ In this paper, attention is directed chiefly to the values and behavior norms associated with various social systems. However, other aspects of social systems may also be relevant. For a discussion of other aspects, see Loomis (36, Essay 1).

some extent and can develop a sense of responsibility for the outcomes of their behavior. People are adaptive; their conduct is conditioned but not entirely governed by culture. The human individual is not an automaton who is molded exactly by his culture but is himself a dynamic force with the ability to judge, to make decisions, and to act with some degree of independence. In consequence, people are never completely socialized, and further, culture is continually changing, since it is a product of behavior and human interaction as well as one of the determinants of action (54, p. 215).

The social systems model employed herein does not suggest the possibility of a single factor explanation for the development of aspiration or expectation. On the basis of social science research and theory building to date, multiple factors are almost always involved.

General Methodological Considerations

If multiple factors are almost always involved in explaining aspirations and expectations, what implications does this have for research and for subsequent action based upon research and theory? The answer is, of course, that complex problems cannot be understood on the basis of relatively simple approaches, although again a word of caution is in order. Experience in the physical and biological sciences indicates that at an early stage of knowledge even relatively unsophisticated theoretical models and research can provide a better basis than folk knowledge or "practical" experience. Provisional propositions can be advanced and subsequently corrected on the basis of "feedback" information from action. Thus, we can and must make use of theoretical models and the best research instruments available.

These include (1) an operational definition of poverty which can be employed in a variety of settings; (2) modern sampling methods; (3) the use of Guttman-type scales and other indexes and techniques for giving operational definitions for complex variables such as values; (4) research designs which are longitudinal in nature, thus permitting a fuller exploration of developmental processes; (5) use of census information to identify areas in which problems of poverty are concentrated; and (6) use of electronic computers which permit manipulation of multiple factors simultaneously. Consideration should also be given to the use of the processes known as computer simulation.

The two basic approaches to the collection of information for social science research purposes are (1) observation, including participant observation, and (2) asking questions. Both of these approaches have advantages and disadvantages. Observation is undoubtedly more accurate if actual behavior is involved, but it may reveal little about attitudes. Also, it is exceedingly time-consuming if detailed observations are to be made of the conduct of a single individual, or even of the members of a particular group or other social system; and the cost may be prohibitive. On the other hand, periodic reports based on observations at a particular period of time or based upon observations counted during a particular period of time, if made by members of an already existing social system such as a Government agency, are relatively inexpensive, since they are obtained as a byproduct of other operations. There are many limitations to the use of questioning, although this is one of the primary

methods by which individuals obtain information for use in charting their own conduct. But it cannot be dispensed with. It is not necessary to accept at face value the answer to every question. Techniques, such as Guttman-type scaling, make it possible to analyze rapidly the consistency of patterns of response.

In the physical and biological sciences, propositions derived from theory are ordinarily tested through small-scale trial or experimentation prior to wider application. This approach has been especially useful in agricultural research based on the principles of biology, chemistry, and physics. Elaborate mathematical systems have been developed for use in the design and analysis of experimental evidence. To some extent, experimentation can also be utilized in testing propositions concerning persons, groups, and other forms of social organization. Much less rigorous controls are permissible with people than with animals or plants, however, and experiments that require really significant departures from existing patterns may require prior legislative approval.

In addition to difficulties involved in obtaining consent, because of the deep-seated American antipathy to governmental manipulation of the life chances of individuals, reservations may be expressed concerning the state of knowledge required for the development of comprehensive and definitive experiments. These reservations need not be a barrier to the construction and conduct of small-scale experiments; but to the extent that these are carried out in make-believe situations in the laboratory, serious difficulties are likely to be encountered in extrapolating the findings and applying them to real life situations. Another grave limitation to the application of experimental methods to human populations is the tremendous difficulty in evaluating the results, particularly where basic changes in values are sought. Full evaluation of results may require years, a generation, or even more. The usual project in the social sciences has a much shorter timespan; and except for Terman's famous study of genius there have been few, if any, really long-term efforts involving evaluation of any significant sample of individuals or social systems.

A research design with considerable promise is the comparative study that attempts to explain existing differences in experiences by a study of historical evidence, and through recall by participants. There are, of course, limitations to this approach, including the lack of adequate comparability of important variables, problems of recall if interviews or questionnaires are used, and inadequacies of records if records are relied upon to supply the data to be used in evaluation (9, ch. 5).

EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF YOUTH

As stated earlier, most contemporary Americans appear to be motivated to achieve recognition as successful persons in terms of the contemporary value system. Since material possessions are highly valued, and since the approved manner of obtaining such possessions is through purchase in the market, great emphasis is placed upon earned income. At an earlier period in the history of the United States, the preferred income source was evidently small-scale individual capitalism, and this emphasis is still to be found in much of the literature emanating from business organizations (61). However, in view of the fact that only 15 percent of the labor force was self-employed in 1960, according to the U.S. Census, occupational aspirations and expectations must be

expected to shift toward occupations which provide salaries or wages rather than toward entrepeneurial occupations.

There is evidence that this sort of shift is occurring. In addition, there is evidence of growing recognition on the part of parents and youths that, to an increasing degree, occupational success rests upon educational preparation. For example, in April 1961 the American Institute of Public Opinion asked parents of precollege age youths in a national sample about thier expectations for their children: 71 percent of the parents thought their children would go to college, with only 16 percent indicating their children would not go to college. In a study of 30 rural high schools in the State of Washington during the 1964-65 school year, the Department of Rural Sociology at Washington State University found that 75 percent of the boys and 65 percent of the girls expected to go to college. This indicates that in at least one section of the United States the educational expectations of rural youth are very high.

Great strides have been made, particularly in the last 25 years, in raising the level of educational attainment of the population of the United States, including those who live in rural areas. Additional advances of a very substantial magnitude can be expected as a result of recent Federal legislation.

Faris presented an optimistic picture of the great success already achieved in raising the level of educational achievement and ability in the United States:

> Aware as we all are of the educational boom in the United States, we may still overlook its spectacular implications for the future. What is happening at the present time is that the nation is quietly lifting itself by its bootstraps to an importantly higher level of general ability--an achievement which, though less dramatic than the space voyage to the moon and less measurable than the Gross National Product, may mean more to the national future than either (17, p. 839).

Rural America presents a less optimistic picture. Investigators in many parts of the United States have found that farm boys and girls tend to have lower educational aspirations than those who do not live on farms. (Cowhig and Nam found that these differences are fairly general 13, p. 1).

The same study revealed that among persons 16 to 24 years of age who were not in school, farm males who had failed to complete high school were most frequently employed as farm laborers. There was a marked tendency for those with lower educational attainments to enter unskilled lower status jobs (13, p. 1).

It is clear that advances in farm technology will further reduce the number of attractive employment opportunities on farms. Furthermore, many of the jobs which remain will require a high degree of technical training. As in the immediate past, most American farm boys and girls will have to leave the farm to find employment which will permit them to obtain the income necessary to achieve a satisfactory level of living, as judged by contemporary American standards. Those who do leave farms will find that most employment opportunities outside of agriculture require considerable educational background as well as a high degree of technical proficiency. There is little doubt that, if

current trends toward automation persist, the demand for untrained and unskilled laborers will be severely curtailed in the future. The United States is becoming a nation of occupational specialists, and unskilled, uneducated workers have poor prospects.

Perceptive and insightful research is greatly needed to assist the schools in working effectively with children and adolescents who come from families that do not value education highly and do not equip their children to compete satisfactorily as students.

Brief Review of Literature

A number of studies by rural sociologists and other social scientists in recent years have thrown considerable light on some of the factors which influence educational and occupational aspirations of youth. A brief review of the evidence from selected studies follows.

Aspirations Versus Expectations

Relatively few studies have obtained information concerning expectations as well as aspirations. The available information with respect to the relationship between occupational aspirations and expectations of high school students indicates that a substantial proportion of these students tend to revise their expectations downward as compared with their aspirations (43, 52). The same phenomenon has been observed with respect to educational expectations, although the downward revision tends to be less drastic. For example, a study in the State of Washington, revealed that 72 percent of sophomore, junior, and senior girls in 30 rural high schools aspired to attend college and 65 percent indicated that they expected to attend. Comparable figures for boys were 77 percent and 75 percent, respectively (57).

Verbal reports of occupational aspirations and plans by children and adolescents who have not yet entered the labor force should be regarded as indications of occupational interests. There is ample evidence that orientation toward specific occupations changes materially during relatively short periods. Data from a nationwide study of 440,000 high school students reveals that three out of four who were juniors in 1960 had changed their stated occupational objectives when questioned 2 years later (44).

Ginzberg and his associates identified three stages of occupational decision-making on the basis of a study of a small sample of upper-middle class boys in New York (22). In the first stage, called the fantasy stage, the subjects, from about age 6 to 11, tended to prefer exotic occupations such as space men, cowboys, and movie stars. The second or tentative stage, beginning at about 11 and extending to about 18, is the period when the boys interviewed tended to vacillate, aspiring to one occupation and then another. The third or realistic stage begins at about 18 or 19 and continues until actual entry into an occupation. While there may be disagreement concerning the age which divides the tentative and realistic stages, there appears to be considerable agreement that a maturation process exists in vocational as well as other

aspects of development. Although the recent evidence from Project Talent shows that few young people aged 16 to 18 have made permanent occupational choices, other evidence indicates that realistic educational aspirations and expectations are common among high school juniors and seniors.

The best available research information reveals that there is considerable occupational mobility after entry into the labor force. It would not be realistic, therefore, to expect specific and permanent occupational choices on the part of the majority of those who had not yet entered the work force. There may be more certainty insofar as the occupational status level or the general type of work desired is concerned.

Haller and Miller have developed a scale to measure occupational aspiration levels of high school students (26). Herriott attempted to construct a scale to measure educational aspiration levels, but concluded that it produced information no better than that obtained by asking students to report their aspirations directly (28). Both aspirations and expectations are influenced by many factors, some of which are discussed below.

Values

The proposition that culture is a principal determinant of the conduct of the members of a major society during a particular period in history is generally accepted by social scientists. Cross-cultural comparisons of a relatively gross nature provide convincing empirical support for this proposition. The corollary which holds that the subculture associated with a particular concrete social system within a society influences the conduct of its members has also gained wide acceptance; in this case, however, we may be dealing with subtle rather than gross differences, and empirical evidence is more difficult to obtain and to assess. Values and behavior norms may be inferred from behavior and to a certain extent from responses to questionnaires and interviews.

Rosenberg presents evidence from a nationwide study of college seniors that values (defined as "things in which people are interested--things they want, desire to be or become, feel as obligatory, worship, enjoy") play a part in the determination of occupational choices (47).

Findings from a single Washington high school provide tentative support for the hypothesis that the higher the perceived educational orientation (values) of the reference group, the higher the level of educational aspirations of the respondent. The study also supports the hypothesis that the educational values of the family are less influential than peer group values in terms of educational aspirations, if there is a difference between the two (56). 4/

Evidence from some studies indicates clearly that farm boys who plan to farm differ in their value orientations from those who do not plan to farm (7, 25, 30, 60). In a study reported in 1960, Burchinal found that Iowa farm boys planning to farm preferred working with things, machinery, or tools and

4/ These findings are now being checked in 29 additional schools.

enjoyed physical work activities more than boys not planning to farm. Furthermore, Iowa farm boys planning to take nonfarm jobs were inclined to rate the intellectual challenge of the job higher than boys who planned to farm (7).

Kaldor reported in 1962 (30) that among Iowa farm boys in a statewide sample, those who were not planning to farm had higher intelligence scores, higher grades, and higher achievement scores than boys who planned to farm. Also, boys planning not to farm participated more frequently in high school activities and tended to be rated as having high leadership abilities. Haller, writing in 1957, described a statewide study in Wisconsin which indicated that farm boys who planned to farm frequently had lower intelligence scores (25). On the other hand, a study made in Washington in 1964-65 suggests that at that time farm boys who were planning to farm were as likely as those planning to enter nonfarm occupations to aspire to, and to expect to obtain, a college education (57).

Coleman found evidence that in some respects the values and attitudes of adolescents differ from those held by adults, although there are fundamental similarities (11, ch. 2, 3, 10). Coleman also found some differences between communities in the adolescent subculture.

Differences in educational and occupational aspirations discovered by many investigators may reasonably be attributed in some degree to distinctive values associated with various social systems.

Economic Circumstances of Family

The economic circumstances of the family of origin evidently influence the aspirations and expectations of younger members substantially. Specifically, poverty severely limits the degree to which the family can participate in the fruits of the "affluent society" in terms of material possessions; and, more important, poverty appears to limit the contacts and channel the activities of younger members in ways which are not conducive to upward occupational mobility. Contrary to the view held by some earlier thinkers that poverty is a spur to upward mobility, the reverse seems to be the case with today's poor. This situation has been most cogently stated by Lipset and Bendix:

> If an individual comes from the working class, he will typically receive little education or vocational advice; while he attends school, his job plans for the future will be vague and when he leaves school he is likely to take the first available job he can find. The poverty, lack of planning, and failure to explore fully the available job opportunities that characterize the working class family are handed down from generation to generation. The same accumulation of factors, which in the working class creates a series of mounting disadvantages, works to the advantage of a child coming from a well-to-do family (35).

Sewell and Orenstein suggest that a boy from a family with a father who pursues a low status occupation tends to aspire to a low status position because--

> . . . his intimate adult contacts are restricted to those in lower-status occupational positions. Lower status adults lack intimate and detailed knowledge of the activities of high-status persons to pass on to the lower status youth. They also have lower economic aspirations for themselves and recommend lower status occupations to others (50, p. 562).

Kaldor and his colleagues found that both economic and noneconomic factors tended to be involved in the choice of farming as an occupation. Boys who planned to farm came more often from families that were better able to provide financial assistance, and this was especially true for boys who indicated that they were certain about their occupational plans. They also found that boys who were planning to farm had lower educational aspirations than those who planned to follow other careers (30, pp. 611-612). Empey found that occupational aspiration levels of Washington high school seniors were influenced by the status levels of the occupations of their fathers (16).

Personal Role Models

Miller and Form suggested a number of years ago that other individuals of significance to a youth may serve as primary work models (38, pp. 521-523). They mentioned specifically the mother, father, brothers, and sisters. This point of view has evidently gained widespread acceptance, but there have been no major studies focused on educational and occupational role models (although fragmentary information is contained in a number of studies, including those of the present writer). Sewell and Orenstein suggest, but without documentation, that occupational role models of higher status youth are likely to be different from those of lower status youth (50, p. 562).

Interpersonal Relationships

A number of investigators have found evidence that many boys and girls discuss their educational and occupational plans with parents, brothers and sisters, friends, counselors, teachers, and others. In a study made by the writer, three out of four high school seniors indicated awareness that some person had influenced their occupational planning in a helpful way; furthermore, some respondents identified categories of persons who had exerted a negative influence on the choice of a specific occupation (52, p. 22).

Alexander and Campbell found support for the importance of interpersonal relationships with friends in a sociometric analysis of data obtained from 1,401 male seniors in 30 high schools (1, pp. 568-575).

Simpson found support in a North Carolina study for ". . . the conclusion reached by Kahl, Floud and associates and Bordua, that parental influence is a factor in the upward mobility of working-class boys . . . (51, p. 521)." He also reported evidence of peer group influences on occupational aspirations and behavior of working-class boys. Specifically, he found that working-class boys who aspired to higher level occupations tended to associate with middle-class boys and resembled the latter in their extracurricular activity patterns (51, p. 522).

School Experiences

Burchinal in his review of the factors influencing occupational choices of rural youth calls attention to the importance of both formal and informal school experiences. He observes that communication skills and specialized knowledge are attributable primarily to formal education and says "expectations of success and development of competency and of educational and occupational aspiration levels result, at least in part, from formal learning experiences and perceptions of teachers' evaluations (7, pp. 17-18)."

Some investigators have noted generally higher levels of educational and occupational aspirations among those who earned higher grades and were more active in extracurricular activities, especially those who held leadership positions (52, 68). Coleman found indications that while the peer group culture tended to depress intellectual activity, giving highest status to athletic stars rather than to scholars, some schools emphasized only athletics whereas others emphasized both athletics and scholarship (11, ch. 9).

Work Experiences

Studies made by the writer in the State of Washington emphasize the importance of actual work experience in the development of occupational preferences (52, p. 31). Others who have noted this include Youmans (68), and Christensen and others (10). The writer has suggested that the stimulating effect of actual employment is sufficient to warrant special effort to make available to adolescents work experience which they can interpret as meaningful and significant rather than routine and casual (54, p. 261). Unfortunately, most of the work available to young people does not closely resemble work in the technical or professional occupations that will provide the primary opportunities for those who are upwardly mobile. Furthermore, actual work experience, unless interpreted within a purposeful frame of reference, may not provide learning that is significant.

Self Appraisal

The aspirations of a person with respect to education and occupation should, on the basis of propositions derived from sociological theory, be influenced very materially by his appraisal of himself which, in turn, reflects his estimate of how he is appraised by other persons who are significant to him. This has been accepted, for the most part, as a self-evident proposition by sociologists, and relatively little research of an empirical nature has been done either to validate the general proposition or to learn

the specific ways in which self-appraisal of abilities and aptitudes affects aspirations. A recent exception is the work of Herriott. He found in a study made in Massachusetts that intellectual self-concept was significantly related to educational aspirations when 17 other variables were held constant (28, p. 170). Brim has inferred from studies of the influence of others in the development of self-concepts of students in public and private high schools that an individual's motivation is derived from the desire to conform to perceptions of the expectations of others who are significant to him (5, p. 159).

Other Factors

The literature on occupational decision-making by adolescents contains a large number of theoretical formulations. Hoppock has presented excerpts on occupational choice theorizing from the following writers: Belin; Blau; Gustad; Jessor; Barnes and Wilcock; Grill; Caplow; Clark; Forrer; Ginzberg and others; Holland; Hollingshead; Klein and Schneck; Miller and Form; Roe; Schaffer; Super; Tyler, Warner, and Abegglen. Readers interested in reviewing these formulations are referred to Hoppock (29).

As the writer has pointed out elsewhere (53), consideration of an occupational field or an occupational role by a person who has not yet entered the labor force appears to consist primarily of imagining the requirements, performance, rewards, and disadvantages of the role in terms of its suitability in the light of his self-appraisal of abilities and aptitudes. The process involves evaluation of the actual or presumed approval of other people who are important to the person making the decision. For example, a young male making a decision imagines how it would appear to his parents, his close friends, his girl friend, or others who are important to him if he became a farmer, an economist, a butcher, or something else. It is unlikely that a very high degree of rationality exists in occupational decision-making by adolescents, although some decisions may be more rational than others. For present purposes a rational occupational choice may be defined as one which is arrived at on the basis of systematic and more or less objective evaluation of (1) personal aptitudes and capacities, (2) values and interests, and (3) the prospective rewards and disadvantages associated with various occupational fields and occupational roles. Other factors which may limit occupational aspirations and expectations include sex, color, age, physical and mental health, and visibility of opportunities (58).

Evaluation of the Literature

The literature reviewed briefly above shows that many social and cultural factors--as well as economic circumstances affecting family, community, and society--influence the educational and occupational aspirations of youth. The studies are not sufficiently definitive to permit the assignment of weights to different factors with any degree of precision. The most that can be said at this time is that a multiple factor approach seems to offer the most promise.

Nearly all of the studies dealt with aspirations more than with expectations. In the few studies where information on educational and occupational expectations were obtained, expectations were frequently lower than aspirations. This is not surprising. Aspirations, after all, are in the category of day dreams. In fact, investigators sometimes present their aspiration questions in this terminology.

Little work appears to have been done on the consequences of discrepancies between aspirations and expectations of young people. This appears to be a potentially fruitful area of inquiry since it seems likely that intensely held high aspirations, if simultaneously associated with low expectations, may lead to alienation which, in turn, may lead to other consequences including personality disorganization and antisocial conduct.

Aspirations and expectations concerning education and occupation are unquestionably important aspects in the complex of factors which determine whether a specific adolescent living in poverty will be able to rise to affluence. If an individual has low aspirations, he is unlikely to take steps lying within his range of possibilities to make the most of his opportunities. It must be acknowledged that other factors in addition to high aspirations are involved in upward mobility. Thus, aspirations and expectations must be regarded as only two of a number of important aspects of the solutions to poverty. For example, Bernstein has presented convincing evidence that the language structure of the working classes in Great Britain is a major barrier to successful competition in the middle-class dominated schoolroom (3). If this is also true for the United States, new educational approaches will have to be developed.

If, as suggested above, aspirations are frequently much higher than expectations, research on the reasons for the discrepancy might be worthwhile.

Hypotheses and Suggested Further Research

Hypotheses focus attention on aspects of a problem or theory which appear worth investigating in some depth. Statements of relationships, when phrased in the form of hypotheses, are helpful in the design of data collection instruments and analytical procedures. The hypotheses presented below are based upon the findings of previous studies, the conceptual frameworks presented earlier, and, in some cases, the hunches of the writer.

The hypotheses have been formulated to provide information about the factors involved in the formation of educational and occupational aspirations of rural youth from economically underprivileged homes. It is presumed that the success of social action to raise the level of aspirations and expectations will depend, in part, on our understanding of such factors.

1. Values and norms of peer group, family, and other reference groups are of primary importance in the determination of levels of educational and occupational aspirations. More specifically:

(a) The more highly educational achievements are valued by reference groups, the greater the level of educational aspiration and expectation.

(b) If there is a difference in the value positions of family and peer group concerning education, the peer group value position will have greater weight during high school, and the family value position will have greater weight in the long run.

(c) The more highly occupational mobility is valued by reference groups, the higher will be the level of occupational aspiration.

2. Economic circumstances of the family will influence expectations to a greater extent than aspirations.

(a) Educational aspirations will be somewhat higher than educational expectations among youths from poor families.

(b) Occupational aspirations will be much higher than occupational expectations among youths from poor families.

3. Personal role models of youths from poor families will usually be relatives, personal acquaintances, and glamorous but remote figures such as movie stars or athletic champions.

(a) Occupational aspirations will be influenced more by glamorous role models, while occupational expectations will be influenced more by role models who are relatives and personal acquaintances.

4. Interpersonal relationships are of greater importance among youths from poor families than among youths from more prosperous families, in relation to educational and occupational aspirations and expectations.

(a) Advice from parents, siblings, relatives, and friends will have greater weight than advice from teachers or school counselors.

5. School experiences, including courses taken and participation in extracurricular activities, will influence levels of educational aspirations and expectations.

(a) Students with higher academic achievements will have higher aspirations and expectations than other students.

(b) Students with higher levels of participation in extracurricular activities will have higher aspirations but not necessarily higher expectations.

6. Work experience will influence specificity of occupational preferences; students who have had work experience in a particular occupation will tend to prefer that or a similar occupation.

7. Self-appraisal will influence educational and occupational aspirations and expectations.

(a) Students with a lower self-appraisal of academic capability will have lower educational aspirations, and especially lower educational expectations.

(b) Youths with lower self-appraisal of occupational aptitudes and capabilities will have lower levels of occupational aspirations and expectations.

The list of hypotheses above does not exhaust the possibilities. In designing empirical investigations, provision should be made for obtaining information on the influence of other variables such as age, sex, color, residence, occupational status level of main breadwinner, number of siblings, and community occupational structure.

Research Methodology

Most of the studies cited obtained information from students by means of questionnaires and psychological tests administered in classrooms. In some cases, supplementary information was obtained from school records, teachers, counselors, or parents. Students were interviewed in only a few cases. No instances were found in which essays or projective tests were used.

The virtual absence of longitudinal studies is regrettable; this is probably due to lack of adequate financing of social science research of all types coupled with a lack of long-term emphasis on the problem by action agencies. Most of the research cited has been conducted at various universities by sociologists who have many other interests, and consequently have actually devoted only a small fraction of their time to this subject.

Although there has been some collaboration, the common tendency has been for investigators either to proceed as isolated individuals or to work primarily with a few colleagues having common experience and interests. A subcommittee of the North Central Rural Sociology Committee has had considerable influence on methodology in the North Central States. The same type of influence can be observed in the activities of the Southeastern Rural Sociology Committee.

There is need for more complete exchange of ideas, instruments, and findings, many of which are never published.

The potential study-population includes all rural young people. There may be some disagreement as to which definition of rural should be used. The census definition--which only includes those living on farms, in the open country but not on farms, and in places of less than 2,500 population--seems too re-

strictive. A more reasonable definition would include people who live in the open country, whether on farms or not, outside standard metropolitan statistical areas; and those who live in places of 10,000 population or less.

Because of the impermanent nature of occupational aspirations and expectations among children and younger adolescents, it is suggested that the study population be restricted to persons of high school age, whether enrolled in school or not, and that serious consideration be given to limiting the initial studies to those who are juniors or seniors in high school, plus those who are not in school but are in the same age categories.

Since the rural poor tend to be concentrated in specific geographic areas, consideration should be given to obtaining a representative national sample. It may be desirable to oversample areas where heavy concentrations of particular racial or ethnic stocks are known to live.

Because of the importance of unique local values and behavior norms, samples should be designed to obtain information concerning all eligible adolescents in communities studied. If necessary to reduce cost, information not readily obtainable through questionnaires might be obtained from subsamples of students who have filled out questionnaires in the classroom. Relevant information should also be obtained from teachers and parents, especially parents of those included in samples selected for personal interview. Provisions should be made for obtaining information from respondents over a period of years. Only in this way can the actual impact of various factors on behavior be evaluated. This will be expensive and difficult. However, the recent experience of Sewell in Wisconsin indicates that it is possible to locate as many as 85 percent of a statewide sample of high school seniors 5 years after graduation (50).

Research on the influence of values and other complex factors on the formation of aspirations and expectations requires sophisticated instruments. Construction of new questions or scales, or modification of existing questions or scales developed for other studies, should be guided by the objectives and the specific hypotheses to be tested. Fortunately, a considerable amount of progress has been made in developing and testing instruments for measuring values, attitudes, and behavior norms. A number of scales, indexes, and other instruments have been developed and utilized by one or more investigators. Some relevant scales are reproduced in Appendix A. Nearly all of these instruments have been developed for use in investigations having a particular focus, and consequently extensive modification may be required before they can be used with confidence in an investigation undertaken for a different purpose.

The methodological problems involved in the construction of instruments for use in gaining understanding of specific elements or aspects of complex social and cultural forces are not amenable to simple solution. A promising approach, in the opinion of the writer, is the development of Guttman-type scales to represent configurations of attitudes or behavior which rest upon particular values which it is desired to investigate. Since Guttman scaling procedures are now well known in the social sciences, no attempt will be made

here to discuss either the theoretical rationale for this type of instrument or the detailed procedures involved in the scaling process itself. Some existing scales have been reproduced in Appendix A.

A procedure for developing Guttman-type scales reflecting family culture patterns has been described elsewhere by the writer (55).

The basic approach suggested for collecting information from high school juniors and seniors is use of a structured questionnaire administered in the classroom by school personnel following standard instructions. This should be supplemented by personal interviews with a subsample of those who fill out the questionnaires. The purpose of the interviews would be to request information, such as names of friends and occupational role models, not readily obtainable through the use of questionnaires. In addition, relevant information should be obtained from teachers, counselors, and parents.

Experience by the writer and his colleagues in the State of Washington indicates that it is desirable to inform school directors, administrators, teachers, and students of the reasons for requesting certain types of data, especially family data. In addition, it appears to be advisable to follow a procedure which makes it possible for a student to decide for himself whether he will participate or not. In some cases, local circumstances may make it necessary to give parents formal notice that they may instruct their children not to participate. This can be done by means of letters to parents of prospective respondents.

It seems likely that questionnaires would be ineffective for use with individuals who have withdrawn from school. For such an individual, personal interviews seem the only feasible approach, supplemented perhaps by observation and discreet inquiries in the communities in which the dropouts reside.

It follows from the conceptual framework and from the review of the literature that multivariate analysis is essential. This means that sophisticated computer technology must be utilized in the analysis of data. Computer programs are now available which make it possible to hold constant several interfering variables while examining the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF ADULTS FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS

Brief Review of Literature

A few years ago, Galbraith introduced the concept of the affluent society as a characterization of the economic circumstances of contemporary American life (21). Reisman has characterized our society as consumption-oriented and other-directed (46). As noted in the introduction to this paper, a very substantial number of Americans--including many in rural areas--do not share fully in the material benefits of our affluence. Myrdal has referred to the

economically underprivileged in America as an under-class (41, pp. 43-44). He goes so far as to suggest that some of those who are economically underprivileged have sunk into apathy, becoming reconciled to permanent poverty. With reference to the people who have no skills and few prospects for employment, he has said:

> To begin with, unemployment means loss of income: and for those in particular who have become permanently unemployed, or whose employment is casual and in fields uncovered by unemployment compensation, the loss is either total or at least very substantial.
>
> Such people will become disheartened and apathetic. As parents they will be unable to make the necessary contribution to their children's education. They will be prompted, rather, to take them away from school prematurely if any employment offers, however low the wages and however slender the prospect of future security (41, pp. 46-47).

He states that three-fourths of the families in America who are classified as living in poverty are in--

> . . . occupations for which we have invented the new term 'underemployed' . . . in order to characterize people who have been stuck in localities and jobs at a low level of productivity and, consequently, of earnings.
>
> To the underemployed in this sense belongs the larger part of the agricultural population, the progressive and prosperous elements of which, mainly large-scale farm operators, are in a minority. In the cities they have low-paid jobs, often of a casual nature (41, p. 52).

When judged by the standards of living and of achievement which are prevalent in the larger society, the incomes and levels of consumption of the residents of Appalachia, of rural nonwhites, of sharecroppers regardless of color, of subsistence farmers wherever found and of many others are clearly below the norm.

There is some evidence that not all of the people who are judged by contemporary standards to be living in poverty take a dim view of their objective circumstances. A feature article in the October 16, 1965, issue of the Saturday Review, by a minister who had lived and worked for 15 years among the people of Appalachia, presented the conclusion that many of the residents of this economically backward section of the United States have low aspirations for economic progress and derive their primary satisfactions from other values. The author said that these people are familistic and person-oriented rather than thing-oriented (66).

A long history lies behind the prevailing attitudes toward the allocation of the products of technological society through income obtained by work. The value position now commonly referred to as the Protestant ethic, the Puritan ethic, or the work imperative has long roots, reaching back at least to the time of the Protestant reformation (62, pp. 11-24).

The acceleration of technological developments, including automation and the accompanying decline in the availability of certain types of occupations--especially unskilled and manual jobs which can be performed by the people with relatively little formal education--have generated some questions concerning the extent to which income gained through work will continue to be the primary mechanism for the distribution of the products of industry in the future. For example, the central argument advanced by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution (63) is that productive activities can be handled by machines, and that with the subsequent decline and perhaps even the eventual disappearance of human labor from production processes, the very opportunity for gainful employment in productive occupations will disappear. The Committee takes the position that when this happens every member of society should be given a generous share of the products simply because he is a human being and a member of society, and that he should not be penalized for inability to participate directly in the productive process. We need not enter into this argument, but it is essential to note that some questions have been raised about the utility of existing value positions concerning devotion to work as a personal avenue of economic progress.

At least it is relevant to acknowledge that persons who cannot realistically be expected to attain employment in skilled, technical, or professional occupations or in managerial posts which provide high incomes can hardly be expected to obtain through work the level of income that is essential in contemporary America to maintain what is considered a decent level of living. For such persons, the solution rests not with the individual but with society if the objective of banishing poverty is to be attained. Furthermore, success may come from changing the opportunity structure rather than from raising aspiration levels above what can reasonably be expected.

During the Great Depression of the 1930's, the Resettlement Administration and its successor, the Farm Security Administration, provided educational and financial assistance to large numbers of poor farm-operator families. It is not possible to review the experiences of these agencies in this report. It is the opinion of the writer that many of the techniques developed by their personnel would be useful in working with economically disadvantaged farm families that wish to rise from poverty.

There have been relatively few systematic empirical studies of the aspirations and expectations for economic progress of rural adults. Most of the studies which have been made deal with aspirations for job mobility conceived as a means of improving economic status, although some attention has been given by Fliegel and Roy to aspirations for improving farm income through risk taking (18, 49).

Goldstein and Eichhorn have reported the results of an investigation of the utility of the so-called Protestant ethic for certain aspects of the lives of Indiana farm men who were cardiac patients (23). They developed a scale (reproduced in Appendix B) for use in classifying their subjects into three categories: (1) high work-oriented; (2) middle work-oriented; and (3) low work-oriented. Their analysis indicated that the men who valued hard work most highly tended to be older than the others. They also found indications

that high work-orientation was not as useful as certain other values for health, for occupational success, or for enjoyment of leisure. They suggest:

> The fable of the ant and the grasshopper may have a new ending. In the original story the ant who labored long hours during the beautiful summer months while the grasshopper played was well provided for in the winter; but the grasshopper faced cold and starvation in punishment for his frivolous behavior. The moral was a clear and simple one for children. It taught them the necessity and the virtue of continual labor in preparation for the lean future. The story of the future may be a different one. If the grasshopper can play during the summer while the ant labors and if the grasshopper can accumulate the same or more adequate provisions during a few choicely spent hours just before winter, what then becomes the moral for children? (23, p. 565)

Crockett investigated the relationship of achievement motivation to occupational mobility, using data from a nationwide sample of 2,460 respondents 21 years old and older who lived in private households in the United States (14). He used as his conceptual frame of reference a treatment by Atkinson of the McClelland achievement motive (2, 37). This is a sociological use of an essentially psychological instrument and, to the extent that it can be accepted as valid, represents a desirable development. The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) was used in rating the subjects according to achievement motivation. Crockett says that this is the only carefully worked out motivational scheme which has direct relevance for study of occupational mobility. He concluded (14, p. 203) that his findings support the theoretical position ". . . that strength of achievement motive, quite apart from education level attained, may play an important part in upward mobility."

Morrison investigated some aspects of achievement motivation of Wisconsin farm operators as measured by sentence completions rather than the TAT. He concluded that need for achievement is not simple, unitary nor uni-dimensional in character. In addition he suggests that economic aspirations are generated indirectly and that direct efforts designed to raise the level of ambition may backfire (40, pp. 382-383).

Fliegel studied the relationship between level of aspiration for economic progress and level of income among low income farm operators in Fayette County, Pa. The study failed to reveal any apparent relationship between gross farm income and aspiration for economic progress. Among his 189 respondents, those who were high in aspiration level tended to reject farming and planned to enter nonfarm occupations (18).

In a comment on the influence of values on orientation toward commercial agriculture, Fliegel says (referring to the Fayette County study):

> The data (from a low-income Pennsylvania county) analyzed in this paper can be added to a growing body of evidence that some low-income farmers can be expected to respond poorly to education and action programs which emphasize an aggressive commercial approach to agriculture (19, p. 348).
>
> . . .

It is entirely possible that subsistence farming should be encouraged for at least part of the low-income group (19, p. 351).

A replication of Fliegel's study in Stevens County, Wash., by Roy supported most of Fliegel's findings. Roy concluded: "Apparently the people remaining, owing to certain social or psychological reasons, or economic conditions, had decided to remain in spite of the poor situation (49, p. 674)."

In his interpretation of the findings of a survey undertaken in the southern Appalachian region in 1958, Ford has stressed the optimistic rather than the pessimistic aspects of his data:

> Most of the people of the Region, according to the evidence of the survey data, have adopted the major goals and standards typical of American society. They, like other people throughout the nation, wish to have larger incomes, greater material comforts, and more prestigeful status. And if it seems unlikely that they will realize these aspirations for themselves, they would at least like to see them realized by their children. In short, the people of the Region have become 'progressive-minded' and 'achievement-oriented' to a surprisingly high degree, and a large amount of motivation effort, like the preaching, in the Southern Appalachians is expended on the already converted.
>
> In part the continued preoccupation with motivation at the basic value level stems from the value assumptions of the promoters themselves. They believe that acceptance of goals is not only a necessary but a sufficient condition for achieving them. Firmly believing that 'where there's a will, there's a way', they persistently attribute lack of achievement to lack of motivation (20, pp. 32-33).

The optimistic view presented by Ford is dampened considerably by the admission of Vance at a later point in the same publication that--

> . . . we have deliberately sought to combat any impression that the region is a stagnant enclave. Yet, let no one be deceived; the problems that prompted our new survey are not solved, nor are they well on the way toward solution. Much of the satisfaction to be gained from the changes we have cited evaporates under the stress of national comparisons (20, p. 290).

Dunkelberger investigated levels and intensity of aspirations for job mobility among household heads in low-income areas of the rural South, using data obtained by personal interview from a sample of 965 male household heads in 30 counties in 7 Southern states. He found little support for the popular stereotype that the rural poor are apathetic. He did find that the men in his sample had low occupational aspirations, but he concluded that this was due to their perceptions of what they might realistically hope to achieve. He interpreted his data to mean that many men had high latent aspirations for occupational mobility and that their manifest level of aspiration would therefore rise ". . . in the event that changes occurred in their personal situation which removed any of the limitations serving to suppress these aspirations" (15, p. 82).

Dunkelberger's conclusions on levels of intensity of occupational aspirations follow:

> The male household heads studied possessed high levels of latent occupational aspiration. They were deeply aware that other people live better than they do; they perceive the relationship of white collar occupations to middle-class status. At the same time, they were very realistic about the world in which they live. They were aware of the facts of their situation; and they had lowered their level of aspiration to a point consistent with their prospects for achievement. Although their levels of aspiration were low in terms of the goals desired, the goals themselves were realistic and desired with considerable intensity (15, p. 176).

Although the observations by Ford and Dunkelberger about the high aspirations of poor people in Appalachia and the southeastern United States would seem to indicate that many of the underprivileged in these areas have internalized the basic values of surrounding society, as noted above these views are not fully shared by others (66).

In cases where individual values or the shared values of communities or other local social systems differ from those of the larger society, ethical as well as methodological problems appear to be involved. Should efforts be made to change the values of nonconformists?

Relatively little is known about changing the values of a group to conform to those of society. We know that values change over time, but the direction of change cannot be predicted accurately, much less controlled. Further information is needed to answer the perennial question of whether changing the basic values of any subculture to bring its members into conformity with those of the surrounding society may not be a matter of generations.

Evaluation of Literature

Denton Morrison has suggested that a direct approach to economic socialization may produce opposite results to those which are intended (40). If this is a valid proposition, as the writer believes it is, the task of stimulating aspirations for economic progress among those who are not already ambitious will be difficult indeed; to provide a basis for success in such cases, it will probably be necessary to trace the subtle relationships among the multiple factors involved and identify those which can be used as levers in various situations. Most societal influences are mediated through reference groups; consequently, it is through these social systems that significant changes in the values must be attained. But it is one thing to recognize the need for such an approach and quite another to implement it. Before mounting large-scale programs of action along these lines, additional research seems desirable. Such research should not overlook the findings of previous studies that the important social systems of the underprivileged are not formal organizations or government agencies, but kinship and friendship systems plus, in some cases, the neighborhood community. These earlier studies suggest that it

would be profitable to study these social systems in detail with special attention to the values which are at variance with those generally accepted in the larger society, and to patterns of relationship which impede or facilitate acceptance of new ideas.

Hypotheses and Suggested Further Research

The hypotheses presented below have been formulated as guides in obtaining information on factors involved in the formation of aspirations of low-income rural adults for economic progress.

1. Values and norms of family and other reference groups are of primary importance in determining levels of aspirations for economic progress.

   (a) If reference group values correspond to those of the larger society, aspirations will be higher than if values are familistic.

2. The work history of the head of the family will influence aspirations for economic progress.

   (a) Family heads who have been employed only in low-status occupations will have lower aspirations than those who have worked at higher status occupations.

3. Low educational attainments will tend to depress aspirations for economic progress.

4. "World view" or generalized perceptions of reality will influence aspirations.

   (a) Persons who are alienated or in a state of anomia will tend to be fatalistic and resigned to the status quo and hence will tend to have low aspirations for economic progress.

5. Economic circumstances of a person or family will influence aspirations.

   (a) Those who are in the poorest circumstances will have the lowest aspirations and will tend to be apathetic.

6. Interpersonal relationships are the principal channels for information about economic opportunities among the poor, and messages communicated through such channels influence aspirations.

   (a) Those who learn about economic opportunities from relatives and friends will tend to have their aspiration levels raised.

7. Self-appraisal of ability and aptitudes will influence expectations and aspirations for economic progress.

(a) Persons with low self-appraisal may believe that they are unable to improve their economic circumstances, and consequently will tend to have low aspirations.

The list of hypotheses presented above is not exhaustive. Research plans should include provision for obtaining information about the influence of variables such as age, sex, color, residence, community occupational structure, and the influence of expectations on aspirations.

Research Methodology

Many of the suggestions made earlier concerning studies of youth are also applicable to studies of adults. Studies should include not only those who live on farms or in the open country but not on farms, but also those who live in places of 10,000 population or less.

Because the normal mode of living throughout rural America is in family groups, it is suggested that investigations, except those involving seasonal farmworkers, be focused on unbroken families. Furthermore, in view of the increasing importance throughout both urban and rural America of the participation of women in gainful occupations outside the home, it would seem that the aspirations and expectations of both husband and wife should be ascertained.

It might be advisable to limit study of aspirations for economic progress to families with heads under 45 years of age. This age cutoff is suggested because it does not seem realistic to anticipate any substantial success with occupational retraining of older persons. Vance suggests an age lower than 45. Writing about the Appalachian mountaineers, he said:

> In 30 years the "lost generation of mountaineers," those too old to adjust and too set in their ways to change, will be over 70 and passing off the stage. Realistically, most of this group must be written off so far as any major economic contribution is concerned and special provision as necessary should be made for their welfare in the form of public assistance (20, p. 298).

The problems of constructing data-collecting instruments for use with rural adults are certainly not less complicated than the problems of constructing instruments for use with adolescents. Of course, the instruments should be standardized to qualify for repeated use for particular groups of respondents. Some scales which appear to have promise are reproduced in Appendix B.

Because of the evidence presented by Bird and others that many of the poor are not well educated, it is doubtful that mailed questionnaires can be used to collect valid data (4). The only feasible alternative appears to be personal interviews. If the data-collecting instruments are well structured,

careful instructions have been developed, and provision is made for adequate training, there is no reason why local interviewers cannot be employed. The writer's experience with local interviewers in the State of Washington indicates that it is easier to recruit competent women interviewers than competent men.

Special precautions need to be taken to insure that intimate personal information obtained through personal interview is given confidential handling. Interviewers should not be permitted to interview their relatives, friends, or neighbors; and they should be asked to sign a pledge that they will respect the confidential nature of the information obtained.

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APPENDIX A. SELECTED SCALES FOR POSSIBLE USE IN STUDIES OF ADOLESCENTS

Three scales which appear to be worthy of consideration in connection with a major study of the educational and occupational aspirations of rural youth are discussed below.

The Haller-Miller Level of Occupational Aspirations Scale

Haller and Miller constructed and tested an occupational aspiration scale using data from 17-year-old boys in school in Lenawee County, Mich., in the spring of 1957, and from junior and senior boys in school in Mason, Mich., in the winter of 1958-59. The scale was designed for adolescent boys still in high school. The authors conclude that their occupational aspiration scale (LOA) is practical, reliable, and "evidently a valid instrument for measuring differential levels of occupational aspiration (26, p. 104)."

Although designed by rural sociologists, the scale is primarily composed of nonfarm occupations and rests on the assumption that those who aspire to high level occupations will be in nonfarm occupations; the occupations of farmhand and sharecropper are included but no technical or managerial agricultural occupations, except county agricultural agent, are included.

The Rosenberg Scale of Self-Esteem

Rosenberg constructed a scale to use in classifying high school students according to self-esteem (47). This scale is being used in a statewide study of educational and occupational aspirations in the State of Washington.

The Brookover Academic Self-Concept Scale

Brookover has developed a scale of academic self-concept (6). This scale is being used in a longitudinal study of students in Lansing, Mich. It is also being used in a current statewide study of educational and occupational aspirations in the State of Washington.

APPENDIX B. SELECTED SCALES FOR POSSIBLE USE IN STUDIES OF ADULTS

Following are five scales which appear to be worthy of consideration in connection with the development of instruments for determining the level of economic aspiration.

Fliegel's Scale of Economic Aspiration

Fliegel developed an index of level of economic aspiration based upon responses to 8 items from a list of 10 (18, p. 207):

Suppose you were offered a chance to make a lot more money than you're making now. Tell me whether these things would or would not stop you from accepting this offer. Suppose that it involved:

1. Endangering your health.
2. Leaving your family for some time.
3. Moving around the country a lot (with your family).
4. Leaving your community.
5. Giving up your spare time.
8. Changing to an occupation other than farming.
9. Taking on a substantial debt.
10. Having a sale.

The procedure used to develop the index is called "trace-line" analysis. Fliegel states that his index is based upon a measure developed by Reissman (45, pp. 233-242).

Fliegel's index, which was also used with minor modifications in a later study by Roy (49), does provide the respondent with an opportunity to indicate aspiration for improving his circumstances through taking on substantial debt or having a sale, but does not cover many other possible alternatives. The response categories for the question for each statement included in this question were: (1) would stop me, (2) I'd be on the fence, and (3) would not stop me. Fliegel reports that the last two responses were coded together as a neutral response.

Morrison's Sentence Completion Scale of Achievement -- Need (N-Achievement)

The sentences were presented to the respondents with the following directions: Here are some partially complete sentences. Please finish each sentence by writing in the first thing you think of.

(1) A farmer today should . . . ., (2) A good farmer . . . .,
(3) If I had the worst farm in this area . . . .,
(4) A 400-acre farm . . . ., (5) The ideal man . . . .,
(6) I felt most dissatisfied when . . . .,
(7) Most of all I want . . . ., (8) I used to daydream about . . .

The responses were scored for

. . .Achievement on the basis of a content analysis system based largely on the standard system used for scoring TAT responses. Instead of the eleven point range used in scoring each TAT protocol, however, scores ranging from zero to two points were given to the briefer Sentence-Completion responses, according to the degree to which response imagery indicated a motive to achieve. In an additional departure from TAT scoring procedure, the Sentence-Completion responses

were also scored according to the degree to which non-achievement imagery suggesting the following concerns was present: (1) freedom and independence; (2) material affairs, including health, profit, price, prosperity, wealth, acquisition, ownership, security, material comfort, debt, and selling; (3) association, affiliation, response, familism, fellowship, and sex; (4) new experience and thrills; (5) ethics, religion, and spiritual and altruistic affairs; (6) leadership, dominance, and power; (7) patriotism, democracy, and citizenship; (8) pure affect or emotive expression; and (9) other indeterminant non-achievement concerns (40, pp. 370-372).

Morrison indicates the difficulties involved in analyzing these responses suggest that it would be desirable to include a large number of possible criteria. It would be difficult to use the sentence-completion technique with illiterates.

Dunkelberger's Intensity of Job Mobility Aspiration Scale

Dunkelberger constructed a Guttman-type scale of intensity of aspirations for job mobility which was presented to respondents in the following format allowing a dichotomized response pattern (15, p. 44):

> Suppose you were offered a new job with a chance to make twice as much as you now make. Would you or wouldn't you favor making the change if it meant:*
>
> ...working at night instead of daytime?
> ...moving around the country a lot?
> ...leaving your present community?
> ...giving up your spare time?
> ...leaving your friends?
> ...endangering your health?
> ...working harder than you do now?
>
> *Four items not included in the scale are not listed here.

For purposes of analysis, four levels of aspirational intensity were established (15, p. 166).

The scale was found to have a reproductibility coefficient of 0.91. It also met most of the other conditions required for the establishment of a Guttman-type scale. However, Dunkelberger notes that its validity cannot be regarded as established until such time as longitudinal studies reveal its predictive value with respect to actual behavior (15, p. 65).

It will be noted that the scale contains no items designed to ascertain aspirations or expectations for economic progress by respondents who are not attracted by the prospect of occupational mobility. A further limitation is the possibility that the generally negative tone of the items may introduce a systematic bias or response set.

The Goldstein-Eichhorn Protestant Work Ethic Scale

Goldstein and Eichhorn used responses to the following four statements to classify their sample of farmers into three categories of adherence to the importance of work. The statements are as follows:

(1) Even if I were financially able, I couldn't stop working.
(2) I've had to work hard for everything that I've gotten in life.
(3) The worst part about being sick is that work doesn't get done.
(4) Hard work still counts for more in a successful farm operation than all of the new ideas you read in the newspapers (23, p. 558).

These investigators apparently did not use Guttman-type scaling but classified their respondents into three categories as follows:

> . . .the group of men called high work-oriented is composed of 71 farmers who agreed with all 4 of the statements; the middle work-oriented, those 133 who agreed with any three; the low work-oriented, those 56 who disagreed with any three or with all four of the statements (23, p. 558).

The Srole-Moon Scale of Anomia

Moon's modification of a scale of anomia developed by Srole (59) was used by Dunkelberger (15, p. 73).

The items included in the Srole-Moon scale were as follows:

.. 6 Things have usually gone against me in life.

.. 5 It's hardly fair to bring children into the world the way things look for the future.

.. 4 Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.

.. 3 In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better.

.. 2 These days a person doesn't really know on whom he can count.

.. 1 Even if his family objects, a man should choose the job that he thinks best for him.

.. 0 None of the items.

The respondents were classified into three categories on the basis of Guttman-scale scores: optimistic, indecisive, and pessimistic.

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